

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 154366

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CPRS, PGOV, GE, US

SUBJECT: JEWISH CLAIMS

REF: JEWISH CLAIMS

1. ON JUNE 13 GDR AMBASSADOR SIEBER VISITED CONGRESSMAN BINGHAM (D-NY) TO REPORT THAT FOREIGN MINISTER FISCHER IS STUDYING THE PROPOSALS MADE BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONFERENCE OF JEWISH MATERIAL CLAIMS DURING HIS JUNE 6 MEETING WITH THEM AND CONGRESSMAN BINGHAM (PARA 4 REFTEL). BEFORE RESPONDING TO THOSE PROPOSALS, SIEBER SAID THAT FISCHER WOULD APPRECIATE A CLARIFICATION OF THE METHOD OF PROVIDING PAYMENT IN MFN-TREATED GOODS AND A READING FROM THE CONFERENCE ON WHETHER THE CONFERENCE EXPECTED THE GDR TO ACKNOWLEDGE A LEGAL OBLIGATION WITH REGARD TO THE CLAIMS-OF NAZI VICTIMS.

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2. SIEBER'S QUERIES WERE RELAYED TO BEN FERENCZ OF THE CONFERENCE, WHO WROTE BINGHAM A LETTER JUNE 13 DESCRIBING THE WAY IN WHICH THE FRG HAD EARLIER PROVIDED REPARATIONS AND MAKING CLEAR THAT THE CONFERENCE DID NOT EXPECT THE GDR TO ACKNOWLEDGE ANY LEGAL OBLIGATION WITH REGARD TO THESE CLAIMS.

ROGER MAJAK OF BINGHAM'S STAFF TOLD A DEPARTMENT OFFICER JUNE 14 THAT BINGHAM WILL ARRANGE A FOLLOW-UP MEETING WITH SIEBER AS SOON AS FERENCZ'S LETTER IS RECEIVED. MAJAK SAID THAT, IN THEIR MEETING JUNE 13, BINGHAM HAD SUGGESTED TO SIEBER THAT AN OFFICE IN THE US MIGHT BE SET UP TO MARKET THE GOODS PROVIDED AND HAD SUGGESTED ALSO THAT THIS TYPE ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE A FOOT IN THE MFN DOOR FOR THE GDR. ACCORDING TO MAJAK, A LEGISLATIVE EXEMPTION FOR THE GDR FOR AN ARRANGMENT OF THIS SORT WOULD BE SALEABLE ON THE HILL.

3. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, FERENCZ TOLD DEPARTMENT OFFICER THAT THE STATEMENT ON JEWISH CLAIMS AGAINST THE GDR WHICH WILL BE ISSUED AT THE CONFERENCE'S MEETING IN LONDON NEXT WEEK WILL BE MILD AND A COPY OF THAT STATEMENT WILL BE TRANSMITTED THROUGH AMBASSADOR SIEBER TO FOREIGN MINISTER FISCHER ALONG WITH A NOTE OF THANKS FOR THE JUNE 6 MEETING BETWEEN FISCHER AND CONFERENCE LEADERS. DEPARTMENT OFFICER INFORMED SIEBER JUNE 13 OF FERENCZ INTENTIONS IN THIS REGARD AND FACT THAT HE HAD ALREADY WRITTEN TO BINGHAM ANSWERING FISCHER'S QUESTIONS. NEWSOM

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